

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 2-4, 6-7, 10-11 and 13-20 are amended, and claims 1 and 12 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter therein. Claims 3 and 14 are rewritten in independent form, and claims 19 and 20 are amended to include the features recited by claim 3. No new matter is added. Accordingly, claims 2-11 and 13-20 are pending. Reconsideration and allowance of the present patent application based on the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the amendments merely amplify issues discussed throughout the prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of this Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Claims 3-9 and 14-18 were objected to, but indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, claims 3 and 14 have been rewritten in independent form, claims 4 and 6-7 have been amended to depend from claim 3, and claims 13 and 15-18 have been amended to depend from claim 14. Therefore, claims 3-9 and 14-18 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 3-9 and 14-18 are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 10-13, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Barrett *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,199,069) in view of Obayashi *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,564,077).

Claims 1 and 12 have been canceled rendering their rejection moot; additionally, claims 2 and 10-11 have been amended to depend from allowable independent claim 3, and claim 13 has been amended to depend from allowable independent claim 14. Therefore, claims 2, 10-11 and 13 are allowable by virtue of their dependence on allowable independent claims.

Moreover, claims 19 and 20 have been amended to positively recite the features of claim 3, which were indicated to be novel and non-obvious over the art of record. Therefore, claims 19 and 20 are also in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Barrett in view of Obayashi are respectfully requested.

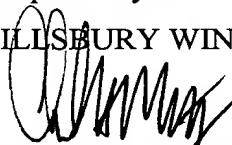
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All rejections having been addressed, Applicants request issuance of a notice of allowance indicating the allowability of all pending claims. If anything further is necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, Applicants request that the Examiner contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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